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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING RAPID DISPLAY  
OF MULTIPLE IMAGES FROM A DIGITAL IMAGE DATABASE

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A digital image processing system for displaying digitized images on a screen of a display unit includes a data base such as a compact disc on which the digitized images are stored, a plurality of image memories for holding the digitized images for display, and a display unit having a screen including a two-dimensional array of pixels. The screen is divided into sections by designating subsets of the screen pixels by row and column, and the images stored in the image memories are allocated to the sections of the screen by mapping image data pixels to the screen pixels. Under user control, different images may be displayed on different sections of the screen. The number of images, and the specific images from the data base, are user selectable and independently manipulable. To reduce a latency time for displaying images responsive to user commands, the images may be arranged in a sequence. Responsive to a user command to load a first image into an image memory and display it, one or more other images adjacent to the first image in the sequence are read from the data base and held in other image memories, otherwise unused. Thus, if a subsequent user command directs the system to display one of the adjacent images, the latency time for reading that image from the data base and holding it in another image memory is reduced.

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